Ross Dowson archives – correspondence – Years 1969 & 1970

1969

01_04 +Document: "**Discussion on Vietnam** held during Plenum period:" G.I.-Civilian Chicago Anti-war Action report; the Politics of the next (Toronto) demonstration: the main slogans; demonstration day; Viet. Mobil.Cttee. facilities, finances, *C-V(Newsletter),* Cdn Cttee for the International War Crimes Tribunal; personnel

01_12 +Ruth & Reg (Bullock, Vancouver): Missed you at the Plenum; Student conference and Youth plenum a big success; the Engler-Rands tendency

01_24 Open letter to the Vancouver branch organizer; re our phone discussion on the case of the 114 at Simon Frazer (University); we should advocate they plead **not guilty** and not cave in to a prosecutors deal; how to conduct a principled and effective defence

03_06 Letter to Fred (Callaghan?), Newfoundland, re: speakers available for antiwar meeting

04_01 Letter to comrades at Coldwater (ON) re: their formation of a LSA branch

07_29 **+Document:** "Statement to be inserted in the document Our Organizational Character, approved by the PC in agreement with the Quebec CC members: the party unites workers of both nations, Quebec struggles inevitably fuse with those of English Canada, Quebec workers have not yet opted for independence

08_20 Letter to all branches and members at large; Comrades, re: calling attention to new document ``For an Independent and Socialist Canada ` and formation of new current around NDP convention, independent of the Socialist Caucus which will be open to collaboration

08_29 +Letter to Reg (Bullock), Vancouver: police harassment of our Quebec forces, BC and cross country activities

09_15 +Letter to D.P., Organizer YS/LJS, Ottawa: US Wolforthites publish your letter in hopes to exploit international dissention; that is why discussion with outside tendencies must go through central office

1970

03_07 Letter to Art (Y.), Montreal (from Belgium?), re: failure of QI (French edition of FI journal) to cover Quebec events; on the split in the French section

05-00	*(Undated, found in May-June 1970)*, letter from RD to the I.M.G. (G.B.) extending greeting to new section of F.I. and Canadians` affinity to English workers and labor political tradition; RD`s fourth month in Europe; witness to mass Trotskyist march in honor of the Paris Commune; the importance of cadre building throughout the FI
07_14	+Letter to Reg (Bullock), Vancouver: the big move finished; expansion of the movement; Phil C. unable to get a job in Toronto; running Forums across Ontario, international discussion on Latin America opening up, big expansion in the SWP-US and LC-France
Nov-11	*10-page Document "Domingo Letter" with notations by R.D. ("For information of the P.C." [with forenote, presumably SWP] dated November 24, 1970 entitled "Crisis of Trotskyist Movement in Argentina"*
12_99	*(Undated, found in 1970)* Letter from RD to the Editor, (Toronto) *Globe & Mail,* re: their travel columnist missing a French experience right here in Quebec

DISCUSSION ON V[illegible]NAM HELD DURING PLENUM PERIOD JANUARY 4, 1969

Attendance; Rene, Connolly, Whitton, Crandall, Dunfield, Brennan, Kent, Ted.L, Marlon, Ken H.

Chicago Peport by Dunfield: Demonstration set for Sun. Apr. 6 by the G.I. Civilian Anti-war Action Conference held in Chicago Dec. 28. Sunday was chosen because it is very difficult to deny G.I.'s leave on that day. The main political emphasis will be solidarity with the G.I.'s. The demonstrations will focus on about six major cities where there are military bases. The Chicago conference was probably the broadest sponsored ever in the U.S. anti-war movement. The main forces outside of the conference were the National Mobilization and SDS.

m/c that the weekend of the 6th be projected as the time for Canadian demonstrations.

The Politics of the Next Demonstration. Report by Whitton:

The main demands will be "Withdraw U.S. Troops Now" and "End Canada's Complicity". We will project the danger of Canadian troops being sent to Vietnam as part of a "peacekeeping" force as a major theme. We will broaden this in our propaganda to the general question of Canadian imperialist intervention in the internal affairs of other countries and to Canadian participation in the NORAD--NATO military alliances. Our anti-war spokesmen will speak on NATO and we will promote slogans like "NATO, NORAD, ICC, End Canada's complicity" on the marches. We will move strongly with the issue of NATO into the NDP. The possibilities are better than ever before for involving the NDP in the mobilization. There may be some resistance from the leadership to the position of opposition to Canadian "peace-keeping" forces, but this will not deter us from putting forward our position vigorously without presenting the anti-war movement as challenging the leadership of the NDP as such. The C.P. and pacif' ists do not pose a serious problem for the mobilization. The VMC has sufficient stature to call the demonstration on a Canada-wide basis at its conference Jan. 25. We must make particular efforts in Montreal to build a massive demonstration. We will move aggressively in the student arena, both to gain student council endorsation and to carry a big public campaign for the marches. Each local area will be encouraged to organize a march in its own area.

Day of the Demonstration: It was decided that Sunday would be best because 1) It is the day of the American demonstration, 2) It is the one Sunday when many people come into the central areas of the cities, 3) It is the traditional day of pacifist marches and thereby puts pressure on these types to come in, 4) In Toronto a march on Yonge Street is legal on Sundays. It would be a victory for us to hold a massive, peaceful march down Yonge Street without police harassment.

VMC Facilities: More films, literature, buttons etc. must be made available. A printed brochure should be put out listing what is available and ads. should be placed in publications like Canadian Dimensions and The Commonwealth. During mobilizations posters and buttons should be made available to the cross-Canada movement. A periodic bulletin would help to give direction to committees. Notices and minutes of all important VMC meetings should be sent across the country to other committees and prominent individuals. The VMC Headquarters should be made more attractive and operational to give the committee the kind of public face it should have.

Finances: The VMC should become a business operation. All materials should be made available at a cost which will bring a modest profit to the VMC. On special occasions committees should raise money for the work of VMC as it becomes the center for the anti-war movement in English speaking Canada.

CVN: The CVN will be changed to a mobilizer which will build actions and be sold on actions. This is in effect what it has been over the last period. It is not necessary for the CVN to come out monthly to serve as an anti-war publication. m/c That we recommend that the CVN be altered to a tabloid so as to be better able to fulfill the role of a mobilizer than the present format. m/c That a circular be sent out by the Editorial Board announcing the change to a tabloid and that this circular urge committees to pay their debts and raise money so the newsletter can continue its work in the new format.

Canadian Committee for the International War Crimes Tribunal: When we know what material is available from the Bertrahd Russell Peace Foundation in the Unites States we will send a circular cross-country to publicize the material available. We will redouble our efforts to sell the War Crimes pamphlet widely.

Personnel: We have failed to develop sufficient public spokesmen for the VMC. We will have to move a designated comrade forward into the VMC leadership. We will make a conscious effort to build up selected comrades as local anti-war leaders across the country.

January 12, 1969

Dear Ruth and Reg;

I imagine that you did not come to the plenum becouase of awareness of our poor financial position--and after all someone has to keep the operation in gear.

Well we missed you. It was a very good plenum and the week before and the week after ,all part of the same operation,was very good too. The Student conference was a big success as you will see from the latest Vanguard Eminent guests--Peter Warrien, Lemieux of MIS and even Laurier LaPierre--fortunately the latter did not ask to speak. I participated in the youth plenum--they really want our help---- and came away with a feeling of confidence that we are really building a unified leadership. Brian Slocock's performance was a very poor one . He threw his locument in without any consulation with any of the League leadership in Vancouver I would imagine . Actually this was very good as it is the clearest statement, least ambivalent work from this tendency that we have received. They dont have any concept of building our movement at all. As you have probably heard the youth leadership put in a simple statement about the key challenge and opportunity to build the YS. Brian went through the motions of expounding his view but without any conviation whatsoever. Brian Waite expressed his opposition in the form of a question as did Ken H--and everyone then enthusiatically voted to build the YS--not the much touted but grossly overrated SDU. I would be very much suprised if Brian remained with us.

By now you have possibly had the Vancouver area CC comrades meeting. I hope you agree with the understanding we arrived at here that we should make a serious effort to analyse the Engler-Rands tendency--that we can no longer proceed as we have that that defector had this hang-up or the other one had that problem.It can be a very valuable experience for the movement even though Engler and Rands have ho sympathy outside of Vancouver and possibly Edmonton---and even thought they may just fall into limbo next week. I think they did us a favor with that document. I have been quite tied up the last week or so but managed to pick up a few pages of it while waiting for a train in Belleville last night. The first page which calls for an end of preconceived organizational forms and a new beginnin in the realm of strategy and tactics ---to meet the spontaneous radicalization is completely cancelled out in the very next page with its synposis of our transitional program (not too good).

I hope we can quickly come to grips with Phil's problem if his health doesn't take a drastic turn for the better. A difficult situation as it tends to cripple us from moving out.

Didn't have too much chance to get to know the Vancouver comrades who came down. Ken I hear gave a really excellent report on Simon Fraser to the students conference and played a very good role as MC at our New Years bash. Didn't have any chance to talk to Waite but all in all I think we have some very good material and are now coming out of the woods. John S is very optimistic

fraternally Ross

January 24, 1969.

To the Vancouver branch organizer.

Re our phone discussion on the case of the 114 at Simon Frazer.

There is no doubt in my mind that the Central Committee's position (John R., myself and all Vancouver CC members who are on the spot are agreed) with regards to how we should respond to the question of guilty or not guilty on the non-indictable charge against the 114 is a clear and unmistakeable not guilty.

This is not an unimportant matter but one of principle and the comrades directly involved must act accordingly. They can be confident of course that the entire movement will back them up. Should they retain doubts as to the correctness of this course we are supremely confident that they will come to see its correctness and that any other course would have seriously compromised them as revolutionary socialists, as Trotskyists.

We understand that the whole defence effort has never got off the ground. Our Ottawa campus tell us that Jim Harding in a recent speech there never so much as mentioned the case and responded in a disgraceful manner when he was asked about it from the audience. We understand that the lawyers presently connected with the case are putting great pressure on the accused to accept the prosecution's deal and are threatening to leave the case. And we understand in the face of all this — the pressure of the state, the cowardice of the student leadership, the renegacy of the lawyers — that most of the accused are buckling under.

All the more that our comrades must stand firm. This is the biggest case yet involving the student struggle in this country. The issues are very clear. Student activists across the country are watching it. What kind of precedent is going to be set?

A plea of guilty sets a very bad precedent. Guilty of what? The SF administration is guilty, the police, the courts, the capitalist system. Once you plead guilty you have no defence, you have only silence and acceptance of the court sentence or pleas of extenuating circumstances. After the event, if anyone happens to be interested in hearing from those who pled guilty they can say that the circumstances surrounding the case were unfavorable, the struggle at that time was ill-advised or that it was necessary that we put ourselves in a position where we would have had to pay a $50 fine instead of a $100 fine or that it was of vital concern that the accused not have it recorded on the police record that they were convicted of an indictable offence so they would not jeopardize their possibilities of getting a good job in some area of government employment.

Perhaps there could be other apologies advanced but certainly none of these will be accepted by student militants, not to speak of youth moving in a revolutionary socialist direction. Failure to take a principled stand in this case which has already received considerable publicity and which students across the country are watching will reduce it from what could have been a glorious event in Canadian student struggles to a muck-up and even transform it into an event which could be used for the whole next period by all opponents of the student struggle as an example of

what happens when you take a militant stance. The case of the 114 can become a powerful instrument with which the conformists can bludgeon all militant responses.

Naturally all militants and particularly ourselves who are leaders, will be or are under considerable pressure to go along with the rest of the students who are caving in under the seductive promises of the crown that we will get a lighter sentence, the lawyers who act as brokers for the crown — and all the pressures of capitalist society.

We will be told that by standing firm, by refusing to accept the deal that goes along with a plea of guilty, we will be breaking the unity of the defence. Breaking the unity of the defence when the word unity means common capitulation. That was the appeal that the leadership of the Social Democratic party of Germany made to Karl Liebknecht — if you vote against the war credits you break the unity of the party. Liebknecht decided to stand alone and thereby stand not with other Social Democrats in their betrayal of socialist principles and the interests both historical and immediate of the world working class, but to stand with the new forces that were organizing out of the disaster for the next waves of struggle. Unity? We owe nothing, no matter what their rationalizations, to those who want to accept this deal.

By standing firm we may well spark the conscience of the better ones who went into this struggle unaware of the nature of the struggle and transform the minority into a majority. If we do not, then we are prepared to be in a minority. Yes, even if our action blows up the deal that mistakenly everyone else appears to want to consummate. This deal is in reality blackmail, a combination of blackmail (for they have some real powers) and fear on their part. The Crown is fully aware that it is in a very bad position. They know and everyone else knows that by sheer numbers alone, 114, that the case involves a great social question. Send 114 to jail? A victory of this kind would be a defeat for the Crown. The defence could reveal such matters of a compromising character that the situation would never be the same again (the files, etc.) No matter what they do the Crown cannot help but lose this case. Therefore they have set themselves the task of getting guilty pleas and brushing the whole thing under the rug with small fines. This way all the materials of the defence are buried, the conduct of the administration is condoned, the right of the police to invade the campus sustained etc. etc. The rule of law, capitalist law, is upheld.

We would hope that our principled stand of refusing to plead guilty will evoke such a response that we win the majority. It is very doubtful that the 114 will hold together and those who wish to plead guilty will accept majority rule. Capitulators usually, as is understandable, urge unity behind their capitulation. Should all those charged plead guilty they hope that the capitulationist character of the act may escape notice or at least censure. OK, so those who wish to plead guilty do so. Should the pressure be so great that only we and one or two others stand firm then it would seem very difficult for us to open up a broad campaign which in some way carried the struggle of the 114, but through our small numbers. We would plead not guilty, organize as effective a defence as possible with the aid of lawyers who are prepared to help us carry such a case and accept the sentence. Having done that, that is, having taken a formally principled stand we can consider appealing the sentence. In an appeal our action could not in any way be said to be compromising the rest and we could consider launching a defence of some scope in defence

of whatever number we are. At this stage, the stage we are now in, I do not see the possibility of carrying any serious separate appeal – we would be burdened with the necessity of demarking ourselves from the rest. At this stage we would mark ourselves off from them by our refusal to plead guilty and by our defence which can be well prepared and be very effective.

We are confident that our comrades can prepare a very effective defence, in the court, with or without lawyers representing us. Joe Young is conducting his own defence in his case coning up any day now.

In the meantime we propose as best we are able to carry on the campaign to popularize the case, and win support for the case of the 114. The capitulationists among the defendants and of course the Jim Hardings can be expected to play down the whole case — that too would be part of any deal that they would make with the Crown. We have every interest in popularizing the case and winning support for it. We are part of the 114 and as such expect our share of any funds raised for the 114. The fact that we will not plead guilty and will carry as affective a defence as possible with legal advice (with such lawyers as John Macey) means we have a real interest in winning as much support as possible. It is possible that the capitulators, having not got their way and having lost us as cover for their capitulation will seek to split the committee. The defence committee's purpose was and is to defend the defendants and not to endorse any particular strategy that they collectively or individually make take. We reject any kind of majority rule in such a matter and will fight hammer and tong to preserve the committee and assure the dispersal of its funds to those who want to carry a defence.

Fraternally,

Ross Dowson.

March 6, 1969

Newfoundland

Dear Fred;

It was certainly good and a suprise to hear your voice. I at first thought that it was Ted Lemaire who often phones in from Sudbury.

I am sending you the enclosed stuff right after your call so that you have something to work with at once. First class mail should be only a couple of days--airmail.

The Newsletter should be the best thing for you to promote the Viet cause. As you will note we are using it as a mobilizer. I think that the poster inside is attractive and if we have real opportunities for sales' It would be good to spread one out on a carboard ~~xxxxxxxxx~~ display across your front . When the leaflet comes off in a day or so and the poster later tonight I will send you some. The poster can be used by other than Toronto actions by just mimeographing time and place in St Johns and pasting it over the Toronto message.

We of course would really jump at the opportunity to speak at the university there. There is no problem with regards to speakers. Jaquie and others are available---I favor Jacquie as a woman would go over big and she is the most dynamic speaker. Harry K would be good also--but they will have to decide . There is a good picture of Jacquie in the Febraury issue of the YSF and also a good one of Harry and Ellie too on the leaflet I am enclosing. Harry and Ellie are running for top posts on the SAC elections ---so we have lots of attractivity for anyone to use who would promote our cause with the persons in charge of bringing in speakers.

If the Memorial committee invites us it might be possible for another meeting be arranged that evening for persons who might be interested in talking further with the speaker--you get it--might be willing to launch a YSF club. We have a good contact in Halifax and we might be able to bring him over--a guy who is martimie organizer for CUS(the effecial national student union) is also friendly and we might get him too. At anyrate this could well be the break that we are looking for. They should move fast as soon the students will be tied up in exams and won't attend meetings. Hope you can push them. I would think that the new YSF will impress them

Want to get this off to you--will write later and send you more material later.

with socialist greetings

Ross

1969

THE LEAGUE FOR SOCIALIST ACTION

LA LIGUE SOCIALISTE OUVRIERE

April 1, 1969
1 Cumberland Street
Toronto

Coldwater;

Dear Comrades;

It was really a pleasure to read Mary's note that you have taken the decision to constitute yourselves as ~~the~~ a branch of the League. I am confident that you will quickly find that this will result in a qualitative change developing in your relationship with one another as comrades and revolutionary socialists, and that absolutely vital task we have before us of building the revolutionary socialist vanguard so essential to the achievement of a socialist Canada in a socialist world.

I really regret that I will be unable to be with you at your inaugural meeting. However I have spoken to Regula with regards to your request that she speak on the Building of the Revolutionary Cadre. She is agreed and will be there on Apr 13th. I have shown John your letter and I am sure that he will make every effort to be with you.

with Trotskyist greetings

Doug Dowson

Doug Dowson
executive secretary.

Statement to be inserted in the document Our Organizational Character adopted by the May/68 convention of the LSA/L[illegible]. Approved by the Political committee in July 29/69 in consultation and agreement with Quebec CC members.

The revolutionary party unites the workers of both nations, of Quebec and the rest of Canada, in a common organization. This is necessary as its task is to lead the struggle of the [illegible]rkers to victory over the Canadian capitalist class with its power structure rooted right across Canada from coast to coast and centralized in the state appartus at Ottawa. The socialist revolution is a common task before the workers of both French and English Canada and requires the exercise of the maximum of unity, coordination and power, realizable only through one centralized combat party. The liberation of the Quebec nation can only be won through a socialist revolution which will overthrow the yoke of foreign exploitation of Quebec sustained by Ottawa.

While the struggle of the Quebec workers has many significant and unique aspects it inevitable moves towards fusion with the struggle of their English spea king brothers whose problems flow from the same source--exploitation by Anglo-Canadian capital in alliance with US capital. Locked in struggle with a common enemy, their alliance in the revolutionary vanguard party is [illegible]y to the victory of both. Without such an alliance, the capitalist class threatens to m[illegible]ntain its power by setting off one against the other. With such an alliance their struggle, which inevitable develops unevenly, can be lifted to the level essential to rout their common enemy.

The Quebec working class has not opted for a separate French Canadain state. Should it so, the Canadian Trotskyists would adopt appropriate structures. Our party is firmly committed to defend that right and to mobilize all its strength to support an independent state should the Quebecois take this path.

Not only is the aid of the English Canadian working class necessary to block the capitalist class from preventing the Quebecois taking whatever course they desire; the socialist revolution that is necessary for the flowering of Quebec's self determination will require their alliance with the English Canadian working class.

1 Cumberland Street
Toronto
August 20, 1969

To all branches and members at large

Dear Comrades;

The July 14th issue of the Vanguard carried in full the programmatic document entitled For an Independent Socialist Canada. As it noted this document was prepared by a group of well-knwwn and established NDPers and at an extremely favorable juncture in the life of the NDP---just a few months prior to the Winnipeg federal convention and at a time when there is a developing struggle for the leadership of the party.

While it is to be presented as a resolution to the convention it is possible that many areas of the country have not yet seen it. Unknown to us its publication in the Vanguard preceded the intentions of the authors.

A few weeks after our publication of the document its main sponsors plus a modest number of additional supporters held a meeting in Ontario. At that meeting we learned that many other NDPers including MLA's [illegible] a few unionists and such prominent individuals as leadership candidate Laurier Lapierre have endorsed it. There were some memoranda presented to the meeting which expanded certain parts of the document. In general they strengthened it along the lines of our criticisms. There was general agreement amongst those in attendance that they were moving in the direction of taking on the form of a caucus and that they would seek offices in the party. A leading spokesman of the Socialist Caucus (Ontario) attended and participated fully in the discussion without any prejudice or hostility being shown.

In our August 11 issue we carried a lengthy critique of the document. In future issues we intend to keep on top of this important discussion that will now be opening up---in order to further it and develop it in our direction.

All the evidence available at this time testifies to the importance of the current around this statement. Whatever its shortcomings its general character is such as to make it attractive to radically moving elements in the NDP. The stature of those already endorsing it, together with the fact that the party is entering into a leadership race, barring something completely unforseen assures that it will attract braod support and become the rallying point for a viable left wing.

Our role in the Socialist Caucus in the next period should not be such as to harden it up, present it as contesting with this new force for the adherence of the left or as bargaining for some kind of formal recognition or representation on it. We should encourage the supporters of the Socialist Caucus to move freely into this development and in those areas where it has no forces supporting it become its initiators ourselves. While we have been among the key forces developing the Socialist Caucus we have no interest in stepping into this new promising situation as the Socialist Caucus. Nowhere in our opinion is the caucus that substantial that it would justify this. It would seem best that the Socialist Caucus should not formally dissove but rather slip into a condition of deep sleep so that it could be revived, should we at any future time consider it adviseable.

The Socialist Caucus set itself the purpose of upholding the socialist viewpoint within the NDP in a period when there were few viable forces. It has been largely sustained by forces that have other heavy commitments. This new and favorable development with its promise of a broad viable left wing is exactly what we have been seeking in order to work in for our ideas. With this favorable development we have no purpose in preserving the Socialist Caucus.

It seems unlikely that for the whole next period that the Independent Socialist Canada forces will be able to develop a press of its own. Our press therefore is faced with a much more favorable situation. We will be the vehicle for the views of the best elements in the Independent Socialist Canada forces , providing sensitive criticism and at the same time posing the key issue before all socialists—the building of the League for Socialist Action---La Ligue Socialiste Ouvriere.

fraternally

R. Dowson for the PC

August 29, 1969

Vancouver

Dear Reg;

Your cheque came in as a great relief. The first issue of the printed tabloid monthly La Lutte Ouvriere is coming off the press and the Montreal comrades are pressing us to come through. We must relieve them of the financial problems so they can more easily come to grips with the political problems of puting out the paper and then taking on the circulation task. And it looks certain that they are into a new period of harassment. Four cops came to their last forum--and the next day a police car was out front for hours. Naturally they are using the terror bombings to harass us and the rest of the left and liberal opinion. When I was down there a month or so ago the police picked up two youth comrades who were postering and gave them a bit of a working over. We happened to get good press on that and the police looked like they were going to investigate and thus cover up. Several of the comrades were arrested in Quebec during the big demo at the UN convention. We were fined over $100 for selling without permission of the chief of police. We are hoping that the CNTU will pick up the legal costs. Hope you had a chance to get to know Walter B when we was out there. He will be on staff with Art. In my opinion he has really developed over the past year.

Vancouver

Glad to hear that many of our youth corades are really shapping up. I take it that Gary and Kate are now fitting in. Good to see that Phil was able to go to Edmonton to give the economics class. Brian W arrived this morning. Stopped at the border when going by air--but has now moved onto the bus. The newly constituted Kitchenr-Waterloo branch will be taking on its first real public activity selling the Vanguard and the trade union pamphlet at the labor day parade. A couple of youth have gone up to Sudbury to help Ted Lenoire. Local 598 of Mine Mill holdout has launched off in its first, very first, strike. Ted is on the picket committee and playing a leading roll in getting the joint labor day parade underway. I will be off to Hamilton as the leading comrades went to the south convention and they need a pusher to carry through on labor day sales

But I must pull away.

Warm est regards

Ross

September 15, 1969
Toronto

Ottawa, Ontario
David Porter, organizer of the YS/LJS

Dear Dave;

I happened to come across a recent issue of The Bulletin, the Wolforthite bi-weekly (august 25, 1969)

I was suprised to see reproduced on page four a letter which you had written them.

Naturally they have made a big deal over this letter, giving it the lead on the page, playing up your official position as organizer of the Ottawa Young Socialists/Lique des Jeunes Socialistes, and devoting considerable space to a "reply." Obviously they have seized upon your letter in the hope that it will help them in their attempt to create a schism in our movement over the differences that appeared in the recent World Congress of the Fourth International.

Regardless of the meritsof your letter or the falsities in theirs this is of course quite unfortunate. And that is why we have written into our Constitution, Article 8 Section 8 that ;" Political collaboration with non-members of the League must be formally authorized by the league committee having jurisdication."

Your letter, dealing with material in the previous issue, was certainly not meant as "collabroation." It was an attack. However they have utilized it that way, it was turned out that way. They have used it as a foil.

Since the Wolforthites are an opponent political tendency on a national and internationa. plane the body having jurisdiction in relations with them of any type is the political committee.

We do not see any purpose in attempting to carry this any further--at anyrate anything further in this respect must ,as the constitution lays down, be through the central office.

fraternally

Ross Dowson

March 7, 1970

Montreal;

Dear Art;

I have come to a very firm conclus on that central heating is one of the greatest achievement of mankind--if not the greatest. I havent really been warm since I came here. And yesterday morning I awoke to find about 5 inches of snow although Gisela assured me a few days earlier that the snap would momentarily end. But it isn't the snow or the lowness of the temperature. I see from the Herlad Tribune that you have plenty of that in Montreal--that students have rechelty been marooned in schools and the daily press has been forced to skip whole issues as the paper cant be dlivered etc. Here it is a matter of my being unable to come in out of the cold. The aprtment here is heated by a little stove that circlates water through the radiators. But the stove is nothing but a version of a Quebec heater. It costs a lot to operate (ou have to buy little bags of coal and wood) but it seems sensless to heat the apartment up even when you can mange to cut off two rooms without too much fear of having the rads freeze and then flodthe place.

I am manging to keep the center well informed of my life and times here and what I can gather of political developments in between writing up mat erial for the Militant and LC and if useful La Lutte. But there are a coupl of matters that I should address to you.

I was incensed at the March 2 meeting of the bureau when Pierre went over the material for QI that even now they are not planning to carry the Quebec material. Obviously it is political but Pierre with some little embarassment tries to turn it aside --he doesn't have the document. But I insist that Alain K has it and proably Ernest. The latter affirms this and puts Pierre back on the hook so to speak. Well the other day Ernest told me he only has the English. I was in Paris but was unable to see Kri vine--alt ough I left a note for him in his mail box. At anyrate I think that we should push Pierre tothe wall by your immeidiately mailing to him personally at the QI address a copy of the dbcument in French. Although they share the same office from where I see it Pierre makes out that it is not practical to expect to get the document from Krivine. We easily handled You should send if off right away so there isno excuse. I think it is more important than the question itself. I raises the status of the Canadian govegant in the eyes of the French comrades--which is very important. and of coursethe status of the International minurty.

Are you getting Rouge? It is a stnading joke--when I told Ernest that I wanted a sub he laughed that even if you pay for it it is doubtful that you will get it on a regualr basis--when he learned I was going to Paris he asked me to pick up two recent issues that he had never received.

If you are,possibly you havent yet got the March 1 issue. Inin they give a big coverage of the big aution they plan in comm moration of the Paris Commune. ...probably to be held on the 15th and 16th of May. I am wondering if it is possible for say Manon to come over for that affair. It would be a good experience. When I checked out Icelandia on the basis of a one way fare or regualr 6 months, when you count the cost of going and coming from NY it is no saving --but their excursion or 45 day fares are really cheap. For instance me fare here return was $213--45 days. Even should I not use the return in my case it is as cheap as regualr Cdn.

Incidently I have written the center that we should consider holding cross Canada celevrations of the centenary of the communex.

In that same issue you will notice a rather vague statement on a split in the Ligue. I wrote up some of the details in my draft of the U.S. minutes but I see that Ernest cut them out. The is an internal bulletin on this but it is before the split--Pierre is supposed to write up something taking up some of the material from the bulletin with supplementary comments.

The split is quite sizeable. Vergeat thinks that it is good as it is composed of the elements that opposed the comng into the FI and is ~~generally~~ Maoist-spontaneist. But you cannot overlook the fact that it is primarily the youth--according to Sandor--half the university youth and 1/3 the high school youth. ~~From what I have seen in the~~ It is largely Paris based--about 250 all told. A group in Rouen but a more important group Marsailles--possibly 60. Possibly its greatest significance is not French but it connections in Italy--with our ex comrade Illario. This means a big lift for his spontaneist group in Milan where we have not been able to pull together more than a handful and even worse carries him forward into other areas in Italy. A Really serious situation for the Italian section. What the withdrawla of this current from Nouge means for the subsequent development of La Ligue along orthodox Trotskyist lines is not yet clear--but I would think that it spells good as Vergeat reads the split took place on the weekend following the big student high school upsurge. I do not know how to read that in the light of their influence in our high school circles.

There was a small item about the accidental death of Chartrand's daughter in the Paris press. Hope that this doesn't setback he and his wife's participation in the defense work.

Drop me a line when you have the opportunity

fraternally

Ross

DOWSON TO THE IMG (Britain)

(Undated letter from R.D., found in May-June 1970)

It is both a pleasure and an honour to be able to extend the warmest greetings of the League for Socialist Action/La Ligue Socialiste Ouvrière and the Young Socialists/Ligue des Jeunes Socialistes, (the LJS being) the revolutionary socialist youth movement, independent of but in political solidarity with the LSA/LSO, Canadian section of the Fourth International, to this congress of the International Marxist Group, British section of the Fourth International.

By rights this greeting should be delivered by and in the spirit of a revolutionist considerably younger than myself and by a woman – because that is where the most profound radicalisation is taking place in Canada and that is who is fusing itself to, "taking over" the Trotskyist movement which this year is celebrating 50 years of unbroken struggle to build the revolutionary vanguard proletarian party in Canada.

You should know that the first Trotskyist in the Americas was the Canadian Maurice Spector who continued in 1925-26 under the banner of Trotsky what he and Jack MacDonald, founding secretary of the Canadian Communist Party, commenced under the banner of Lenin in 1921 – and that the Canadian Trotskyists were one of the five groups who first answered Trotsky's call for a new, a Fourth International.

The Canadian Trotskyists are playing the leading role in Bolshevising the radicalization that Canada's youth, like their contemporaries across the globe, are undergoing. The Canadian Trotskyists are already in a highly favorable position to establish a continuing leadership of this radicalization process. We have contestants of course: the Stalinists, the Maoists, even a few Healyites, but on the youth arena we already have established our hegemony over the left.

The youth radicalization has already moved into the New Democratic Party – Canada's labor party firmly based on the industrial unions, and through our continuing work in this party over the years we are in contact with those layers of the industrial working class who are becoming radicalized. Massive unemployment is forcing graduate students (and dropouts), a large proportion of them of working class origin and with whom we have been in contact on the campus, into basic industry.

The Communist Party of Canada, the most Stalinized CP this side of Albania, in a recent evaluation of the new radicalization, while attempting to designate us as ultra-leftists, noted that the Trotskyists are the most dangerous, the best organized, with the most initiative and the most flexible of all the radical currents – outside themselves of course.

We Canadian Trotskyists feel a particularly strong affinity for the International Marxist Group and the Spartacus League. A number of English working class men and women in the IMG have had a Canadian experience – under the direction of the International – for some period they played an important role in preparing the grounds for the IMG. The whole Canadian working class development has to some considerable degree gone along "English" lines. I

myself, ever since participating in the reunification process of our world movement when I had an opportunity to get a bit of a feel of the British scene, have sustained an ongoing interest in Britain – for it has seemed to me that the British working class are perhaps the most class conscious working class in the entire world, with the highest feeling of their class solidarity and class power, and that the English socialist revolution is not only high on the agenda of the revolution in the advanced sectors of the capitalist world but is possibly the top one on that agenda.

This affinity and interest has been to some degree a mutual one. The Red Mole recently had occasion to comment at length on developments in Quebec to which we made a modest rejoinder. Comrade Tariq also had an opportunity to appear on an extensive TV interview broadcast from the Maritimes to B.C. which we have NOT commented upon. Your leading body took exception to our rejoinder on Quebec and some months ago requested that we open up a discussion among our members. We immediately agreed and I must say we in Canada are all very much looking forward to this discussion.

The last four months that I have been in Europe has been a big experience for me and I hope through me, for the Canadian Trotskyists particularly those experiences that I gained from attending the Turin trade union conference and the various congresses of European sections – including the German, Belgian and French movements, and hearing of their work, their achievements, and their problems – at first hand. Perhaps the most impressive and the most memorable experience was the recent action that our French comrades carried out in honor of the Paris Commune – where I saw some 20- to 25,000 people march under the banner of the Fourth International.

It is within that framework that I would like to make a few comments about some problems confronting the Fourth International, facing all of us who want to build on the current radicalization process. World imperialism, with the incredible cynical aid of the Chinese and Soviet bureaucratic castes, has struck a sharp blow at us where we have long had every reason to hope for a breakthrough. I refer to Ceylon where apparently we missed the youth radicalization as it was expressed in that strategically situated island. The struggle we now see unfolding before us under the banner of Bengla Desh which places such a challenge to the as yet relatively weak Trotskyist forces in that area, points up the fact of the profoundly explosive situations across the globe which finds us without any substantial cadre, and sometimes none in area after area. Then too there is the situation that is over-ripe through the bankruptcy of the traditional parties of labor which is providing fertile grounds for a rebirth of fascism, as in Italy where we have all too limited cadre.

We also have to recognize in many of the areas, where Trotskyism has some tradition, where enthusiasm for the Fourth International is highest, as in France and here in Britain, we are faced with strong contestants for the banner of the Fourth, by considerable forces that call themselves Trotskyist and who are not only outside of our ranks but are waging an implacable war against us.

The fact of the matter is that in the face of the heightened interest in Trotskyism by increasing numbers of youth who have been deprived of the necessary experience to build a Leninist party, we are seriously lacking in resources; we are without the necessary means to put out publications on the frequency and scope that is desirable, to set up headquarters and to take on staff. The crisis of mankind as Trotsky said some years back is reduced to a crisis of leadership. At this stage it is a crisis of revolutionary cadre, trained and experienced in the problems of the class struggle and the proletarian revolution. (In this respect I was very much struck by the honest self criticism that our comrades of the Ligue Communiste made of their press Rouge.)

For the first time in several generations the material to build such a cadre is coming into the arena and towards the Fourth International. There is no strategy that can substitute for the process of educating and training this cadre. An essential component of that process is the discussion that appeared on the eve of the last World Congress over Latin America and has proven to have far vaster ramifications that most of us thought at the time. There has developed a certain impatience within our ranks with the process of debate and discussion – reflected in various ways within our movement. We don't see this debate or discussion in any way interfering with the work of the movement but as an inevitable part of the process of preparing the cadre. It is only through the combination of revolutionary practice and theoretical discussion – each one reinforcing the other – that genuine Trotskyist forces will be forged.

With great satisfaction we Canadian Trotskyists have noted the numerical growth of the genuine forces of British Trotskyisrn. We are looking forward to this Congress to mark a further stride forward along the road to the British socialist revolution.

Long live the International Marxist Group.

Long live the Spartacist League

Long live the unity of the Fourth International

July 14, 1970

Vancouver

Dear Reg;

Sorry to have been so long in taking up your letter. Everyone of them has been like a nettle---so calm so patient---but what a prick of my conscience. The I have been working over the past couple of months just as hard as ever--no doubt even harder--the trouble is I have only been able to respond to crises--matter of immediate and pressing concern

We finally moved in here end of May first of June. A big job right at the time of the mobilization. Labor power is very tight unless you are prepared to rupture other work and at that time we were pushing with all our might everyone into the mobilization. Our labor team wasn't able to finish the job before we moved and at anyrate funds ran out and they had to take on another job out at Kingston. We do not have many comrades with technical know how and so I took over the construction job. Well last week we finally finished the hall and the kitchen except for the floor. We havent yet got into the file room-editoral room upstairs. A tremendous job made worse because over the last year or so because of our old cramped space Dick practically gave up on the files--but the material kept coming in , piling up. And of course we want to become better equipped than ever in this respect.

Yesterday we finally took time out to really do the floor--beautiful . We expect in the next day or so the place will now pass with approval of the eyes of the liquor control board--so we will be able to get banquet permits. The place has passed the board of health and the building inspector

As you have no doubt noticed I have been busy travelling around. Montreal is making big demands on us. Opening forums in St Catherines, in Orillia and in Sudbury and things will be moving for us shortly in London. So the movement is branching out in the key lower Ontario area as it is into Winnipeg And of course we have been moving out more into the international arena. Several weeks ago in close consultation with the American comrades we decided that we would withdraw John and Sheila when they came over for the convention. Barry Sheppard and Caroline are coming out and probably wont be replaced until the fall. The heat is on for me to go over and stay a couple of months during the transtion. --actually to stay there for some period but we are all uanimous that we cannot afford this and at most only for the transtion sometime between our convention and Christmas.

And all this is taking place within the developing heat of preparing for our convention. We are now typing up the PC contribution on Women's Liberation and a special contribution from Sheila...along with the declaration of a tendency by Michel Mill. The next document will be the Quebec one. It looks like I will have to be going down to Montreal. Dick has already gone down to work with Art on it for the second time and Art wants me to come down at the end of the week.

Oh I didn't tell you that Jack Barnes phoned me to day to ask if I would take one of the three big marxism meetings they are holding during their Oberlin eduational project--they want me to speak on the NDP. I should go but I think we will try to arrange some other comrade--several of whom can do the

As I say I have been only able to respond to crises--matters of i mediate and pressing concern. But all the above of course makes one aspect of my correspondence or the correspondence that I should be carrying with you of increasing concern. Money Money. But I haven: been able to pull together your various letters. So pressed to keep the headquarters operating- moving, the Labor Challenge. I havent even got a place for myself to work. The place we are allocating to me upstairs with the editorial offices is one great big jam of unassorted materials. So I have been working out of boxes---very portable. And been using the big hall as I am tonight prior to the branch m eting as the central office. Not very efficient...but no alterantive for a while.

We are having a few problems. Phil has not proven able to get a job. and it has had a demoralizing effect on him. It seems that he became so demoralized that he ceased to have even the perspective of going out looking for one He started talking about pulling out and going back to Vancouver. His role in the branch as such has been excellent He has been making a really valueable educational contribution. We have had several talks. He gave me the impression that in part he wanted reassurance about his position in the cadre of the movement. I am not sure as to the origin of these doubts. However I assured him that the whole movement, its top personel, its finances have been geared to get us over the hump in Quebec which we consider the key area of our activity--and that it so happened that we all considered that he had the exact qualities that we felt were necessary to implant there for the next period. I talked about him coming into the center here in Toronto after a period perhaps working full time on the paper--feeling that possibly going on staff, which we hope to be able to work out in Montreal in the near future, was a big issue for him. I am not sure, but at the time I thought that we had worked out matters to his satisfaction. There has been a little relapse again and I was thinking of taking a drastic tack in so far as personel was concerned, then he was reported to be in the thick of things again. Art told me this as he asked me to come down later this week while he and Dick are both trying to tie up the Quebec document. He thinks it would be worthwhile to talk to Phil-- but if he doesn't get a job shortly we will have to take some action.

Aside from our expansion of forums across Ontario now the Toronto forum has perked up considerably with the new headquarters. I intend to put out a letter shortly on our experience with charging admission. Since we moved into the Toronto branch moved into its portion of the new headquarters and carried forward with its forums it has been charging admission---$1 for employed and 50 or 75 cents I think for unemployed. It does not appear to have affected forum attendance at all---I think we are now averaging about 60 persons per forum--with income up about three times. Furthermore the charge has eliminated the dilletantes who used to come to the forum with their peculiar positions often having no bearing on the specified topic. All in all a very good change.

The international discussion is opening up with a roar. At the Brussels meeting Joe turned in a document on Latin America which makes a balance sheet of the guerrilla strategy including the Bolivian comrades' experience. It has been agreed to circulate the IMG congress documents which will be good all around for the movement The minority contribution, particularly Connies is first rate and the total minority contribution exposes the ultra leftist

position of the majority....which as become clearer publicly with

the recent election. I suppose you read Pat Jordan's murky dissoc iation from Robin Blackburn's sectarian position on the Red Mole reproduced in ICP. Well I have seen their special election issue and unfortunately it carries a clear and unmistakable abstention ist line. Healy and xxxxxxx company have been really working them over from a completely correct position. It is good that all the documents will be published. The British minority position is so completely clear and correct--one doesn't have to be a specialist on the Brit sh question or any other question to get the message. The international majority leadership is unfortunately continuing to cover up for the majority--but Al gave an excellent report.

The best scene in the international aside from the US and the anti-war university experience is France. The movement there is making all kinds of connections. For instance we have acutally recruited Maspero. He is the owner of the most important brood left publishing operation in France. xxxxxx He puts out much of the material that Monthly Review puts out here and has been publishing a whole series of Cahiers Rouge pamphlets for us--we give him the copy he gives so many copies payment and sells the rest of the run. Well he has joined us. The comrades are having running disc ussions with Roger Gauraudy.recently expelled laading theoretician of the French CP. He is telling us all kinds of things--about the million of dollars yearly subsidy that the Chinese gave the French CPfor years.how the Soviet representatives by a node of the head told the leadership of the French CP who was to be their leader-ship. An aged but famous partisan leader, the partisan leader, I foget his name, is working with us

The NZ comrades are doing well. I suppose Keith sent you copies of their expanded paper. With the collapseof the Australian tour when Mandel was banned the New Zealand comrades took over and we are informed that they have been successful in getting bookings that mean that the NZ operation is self financing. Alas the leadership does not appear to be too interest in NZ even though the ticket can take them through Calcutta, Ceylon.....;

And even the Philippines where John xxxxx Glenn is succeeding in pulling something togtehr that looks very promising. Amusingly Mandel wanted me to carry this contact work on. Of course I am writing John and sending him material but this type of thing is a matter for the international. Alas the international has some very formal attitudes. For some reason tho we have only one person there the leadership thinks Austria more importan t than NZ which abuts Australia.

I got your recent cheque with the convention assesment. Hope in the next week to pull your letters togtehr and answer any out-standing matters. I assume everything was ok with Sheila's income tax as I sent off everything you sent me along with the forms etc

comradely

Ross

(Found in 1970)

Ross Dowson #2311
40 Homewood Ave
Toronto, M4Y2K2- 961-4554

The Editor-Globe and Mail

What's the score with the Globe and Mail's columnists in the Saturday Travel Section?

Beverley Gray corrects herself as to "enquiries about French language courses" that she has received. Having directed them to the French Embassy in Ottawa in her previous week's column she now directs them to the French Cultural Service in Toronto. To be sure Premier Davis' policies have left a serious gap in the rights, that ~~vehicular dalrence bones~~ fraculties of a bi-lingual Canada should expect in a bi-lingual Canada. But in case there is still some misunderstanding about the French Cultural Service to which Gray now directs your readers this institution can only be said to be concerned with French language courses in so far as it is an agency of the Government of France that provides information on French cultural facilities in France itself.

Over the page Sylvia Charles leads off her article: "So you want to brush up on your French, dine well, relax, enjoy beautiful scenery and experience a different culture. You've been to Paris, the Loire Valley and the Côte d'Azure. Try Bergundy this year," she advises. For those whose tastes for these things are not so jaded or ~~have smaller~~ lesser incomes, what's wrong with having a go at Quebec, la belle province, just down the river a piece.

Ross Dowson